

INTEGRATING INNOVATION

By Rachel Yoka, LEED AP BD+C, CPSM

We consultants have another big and bold year ahead of us. I don't mean the next big project we land or the next big conference (such as the 2014 IPI Conference & Expo in Dallas, June 1-4). Although these are undoubtedly at the top of our collective mind, we have other pressing matters to attend to as well.



We can view this research as additive and “extra” even if it is clearly articulated in our goals and objectives (as a firm, a committee, or an organization).

But we can be more effective and powerful than that if we view innovation and research as integral and critically important to elevating the industry.

The Consultants Committee has made great strides and contributions to date. The IPI/NPA joint publication on sustainability and parking is nearly complete; many on the committee served as authors, reviewers, or both. The Consultants Corner, our monthly column in this magazine, includes contributions from leaders in the parking industry, shedding light and insight on a wide range of subject areas. At the request of the U.S. Department of Energy, we are developing Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Guidelines. The Green Parking Council's Certified Green Garage Program, now in the pilot or beta phase, is, in significant part, the product of the consultant community's dedication to the drafting, revision, and implementation of the new standard. And that all happened in just the last two years!

We are fortunate to have a robust committee with amazing technical expertise and knowledge, along with a new committee structure and format; we will use those assets to the fullest, taking an integrated approach to research and innovation. We are currently formulating an inaugural program around a structured series of white papers that will generate both new research and industry publications to harness the expertise and enthusiasm of both the committee and the entire consultant (and parking) community. We are actively creating lasting connections and synergies as a committee to technology, education, sustainability, and state and regional committee efforts, to name a few.

So we have a big year ahead of us and some serious objectives to achieve. I know the committee (and community) stands ready to get it all done, and do it well. If there is one thing consultants do well, it is work, and work hard.

As always, we are here to tackle your toughest questions—please bring them on!

I often speak about sustainability and integrating sustainable choices into our work and our daily lives. If sustainability is seen as an additive rather than a necessity, it can be viewed as costing more money, time, and aggravation. If sustainability is seen as integral—even if it costs more money, time, and aggravation—it becomes part of the natural ebb and flow of what we do every day. It is an essential element of a successful enterprise. Clearly, the integrated approach will be more successful in achieving the measurable goals we set.

The same case can be made with innovation and research.

The Committee

IPI's Consultants Committee is engaged in the effort to convince stakeholders that *Parking Matters*®, to elevate the parking profession and the specialized fields in which we operate. One of our goals as a committee is to maintain and expand our firms' competitive edge as well as IPI's competitive edge as the single-most effective association in the parking industry. To be on the cutting edge of innovation requires new research, publications, and dissemination to related industries and the public.



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